

The Golden Flyer Roadster

A Car, A Story, A Movement — 110 Years in the Making

In 1916, two women, Alice Burke and Nell Richardson, climbed into a bright yellow Saxon roadster named the Golden Flyer and drove 10,700 miles across America to raise awareness and activate supporters to fight for the right to vote. The suffrage amendment was stalled, just as the Equal Rights Amendment is stalled today.

This March 2026, a Saxon rolls again – restored and wrapped in suffrage yellow, crossing 25 states, again to raise awareness and activate supporters for calling for Congress to recognize the Equal Rights Amendment as the 28th Amendment to the Constitution.

The relay baton that Alice and Nell handed off on a muddy road 110 years ago has been passed across the decades — through archives, museum exhibits, two books, and one fateful Labor Day visit. On March 1, 2026 — the opening day of Women's History Month — the Golden Flyer II picks it up and refuses to put it down.

The Original Golden Flyer: Drives for the Vote in 1916

On April 6, 1916, New York City was buzzing. A crowd had gathered around a bright yellow Saxon roadster that the New York Tribune playfully called "the little yellow ant." Suffrage leader Carrie Chapman Catt raised a pint bottle of gasoline to christen it. Her first blow left a dent in the shiny new hood. Driver Alice Burke stifled a groan — then her partner Nell Richardson whispered: "We'll keep that dent and show it to all the folks down south, telling them Mrs. Catt did that with her own hands."

The second blow broke the bottle. One hundred horns tooted. A woman pressed a \$10 gold coin into Alice's palm. Alice gave a quick lift of her skirt and whisked it out of sight. The Golden Flyer swung around Columbus Circle and headed for the 42nd Street ferry — and into history.

"This little baby will trot right along regardless of mud and mountains."

— Alice Burke, April 6, 1916

What followed was 168 days across unpaved roads, desert crossings, and mountain passes. Alice and Nell packed everything for a rolling campaign: a sewing machine, a typewriter, a fireless cooker, literature, spare parts, and extra lamps for evening speeches. They added heavy-duty tires for punishing terrain — and eventually a gun, after discovering a bullet hole in their kitten's basket somewhere in Texas.

They gave suffrage speeches in every town. They drank from a well with a dead chicken when there was no water and they were reported lost in the Arizona desert. Three years after they returned home to New York City, the 19th Amendment was ratified. See the [Ms. article](#) based on the book, [Driving the Vote for Women](#) by Jeryl R. Schriever.

The Saxon Motor Car: Built for Women Who Had Places to Go

The Golden Flyer wasn't just any car. The Saxon Motor Car Company, founded in Detroit in 1913, had climbed to become America's eighth-largest automaker by 1916 — a remarkable rise in just two years. The two-seat Saxon roadster sold for \$395, delivered 35 miles per gallon, and required only one quart of oil every 125 miles. Saxon marketed its cars to women, farmers, and businessmen, promising economy and durability on roads built for horse and buggy.

Saxon had already sponsored Alice Burke's 1915 New York State suffrage tour, so when Alice and Nell needed a car for their epic cross-country campaign, a Saxon was the natural choice. The company grasped the opportunity clearly: if a woman could drive a Saxon 10,700 miles through deserts and snowstorms on unpaved roads, the publicity would be priceless.

Saxon's fortunes didn't outlast the era. The early 1920s recession hit hard; the company filed for bankruptcy in 1922. Only about 150 Saxon vehicles are known to survive today. But the car Saxon built for women who had places to go turned out to be indestructible in every way that matters.

The Golden Flyer II: Found, Restored, and Ready

In 2009, Maine car enthusiast Alex Huppé purchased a 1914 Saxon four-cylinder roadster. Neither he nor his wife Jeryl had heard of a Saxon — and as they quickly discovered on their first Horseless Carriage Club tour, almost nobody else had either. The question of the car's history followed them everywhere. The answer changed everything.

Longtime Saxon experts introduced Alex and Jeryl to Alice and Nell. Jeryl, a historian and amateur genealogist, went digging in newspaper archives and found "a truly great story." Her 2013 article for the Horseless Carriage Gazette reached children's book author Mara Rockliff, who was researching the same adventure. The two began trading notes; Mara went on to write a children's book, [Around America to Win the Vote](#), introducing a new generation to the Golden Flyer's story.

By 2019, with the 19th Amendment centennial approaching, Seal Cove Auto Museum near Bar Harbor, Maine, was planning an exhibit called Engines of Change. Alex and Jeryl — who by then owned five Saxons and a barn full of parts — volunteered to recreate the Golden Flyer. When they stripped the old fabric from the seat to replace the stuffing, they found something astonishing: a small swatch of golden-yellow paint on the wooden frame — the exact shade they had chosen from period color charts. Could this be the original Golden Flyer? They still don't know. But the car seemed to be telling them something. Jeryl was inspired to write her book after the publisher visited the museum and saw two exhibits: one on the Suffrage Tour and another on Bertha Benz and her drive in 1888. Excited by the stories, he proposed publishing a book about the 1916 adventure.

The Moment Everything Connected

On Labor Day 2025, feminist, activist Kathy Bonk, her husband Marc and friends Tom and Lena visited the Seal Cove Auto Museum. Lena and Kathy were captivated by the two exhibits and bought Jeryl's book. While flipping through the pages on the drive home...ideas popped out. A single act of curiosity set off a chain of events and started the Driving the Vote for Equality Tour.

The parallels of the story of Alice and Nell was unmistakable: like suffrage, the ERA was stalled even though it had met every legal and constitutional requirement — passed by two-thirds of Congress and ratified by 38 states. It cleared the legal bar but was stalled by political machinery. The suffragists had faced exactly the same wall. And they drove through it.

Earlier this year, one of the Saxon roadsters — which had spent its life in dignified green — was wrapped in suffrage yellow. The Golden Flyer II was born.

"The suffragists who fought hardest faced their darkest years just before victory. They didn't know that. They just kept driving."

Golden Flyer II Tour: 25 states and DC, 65 days, 2026 | **Launch Date:** March 1, Women's History Month

The Original Journey: 10,700 miles, 168 days, 1916 | **Original car's cost:** \$395 (\$11,000 today)

Saxons Surviving Today: Approximately 150 known vehicles